

Notice of Allowability

Application No.

10/732,835

Examiner

Thomas K. Pham

Applicant(s)

RUUTU ET AL.

Art Unit

2121

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. ☒ This communication is responsive to RCE filed 10/23/2006.
2. ☒ The allowed claim(s) is/are 1-17, 19-27 and 33.
3. ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some* c) ☐ None of the:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.

THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

4. ☐ A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
5. ☐ CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
- (a) ☐ including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
- 1) ☐ hereto or 2) ☐ to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- (b) ☐ including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
- Identifying indicia such as the application number (see 37 CFR 1.84(c)) should be written on the drawings in the front (not the back) of each sheet. Replacement sheet(s) should be labeled as such in the header according to 37 CFR 1.121(d).
6. ☐ DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

- | | |
|--|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892) | 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) | 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statements (PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date _____ | 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Amendment/Comment |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material | 8. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance |
| | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ |

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

1. An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

Authorization for this examiner's amendment was given in a telephone interview with William B. Ashley on 10/30/2006.

The application has been amended as follows:

Claim 1: line 8 remove the second "data interface".

Claim 33: amended as follow

33. (Currently amended) An automation module operable with other a plurality of other automation modules for performing an automation function, comprising:

means for connecting with any of the plurality of other automation modules to form a single physical assembly;

means for physically coupling with any others of the plurality of automation modules;

means for data coupling with any of the plurality of other automation modules to exchange data with any others of the plurality of automation modules;

means for performing an independent automation task; and

means for exchanging data with other automation modules of the assembly to coordinate the independent automation task with one or more independent automation tasks of the other automation modules to perform the automation function.

Reasons for Allowance

2. Claims 1-17, 19-27, and 33 are allowed.
3. The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

While Lea (U.S. Patent No. 6,349,352) discloses providing basic command functionality and expanded command functionality between a plurality of devices in a network. When a first device is coupled to a home audio video network which includes a second device, a generic control module for the first device is generated by the second device. The generic control module enables the first device to respond to a basic set of commands from the second device. The second device then uses the generic control module to obtain descriptive information from the first device. The second device then generates a parameterized control module for the first device by modifying the generic control module based upon the descriptive information. The parameterized control module enables the first device to response to an expanded set of commands from the second device. Lea does not disclose a plurality of modules have physical interface that allow each module to be physically coupled with any others of the plurality of automation modules and data interfaces data coupled to any others of the plurality of automation modules; and other limitations related to these features in combination with the remaining elements and features of the claimed invention.

And Nicholson et al. (U.S. Patent No. 6,330,337) discloses an automobile multimedia entertainment system includes an integrated rear seat entertainment module in which audio signals coordinated with video entertainment devices in the rear seat can be reproduced using the vehicle's audio system. Multiplex control signals between an audio main control unit, rear seat entertainment module, and CD disc jockey allows free selection of sources for single and dual

play modes. The audio media player is mounted as a self contained unit within the vehicle and generates player audio signals. Nicholson et al. does not teach a plurality of modules have physical interface that allow each module to be physically coupled with any others of the plurality of automation modules and data interfaces data coupled to any others of the plurality of automation modules; and other limitations related to these features in combination with the remaining elements and features of the claimed invention.

The prior art of record fails to teach or fairly suggest to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the invention, in conjunction with all the other claimed limitations, a system and method for configured to control an automation function having all the claimed features of applicant's instant invention, specifically including: a plurality of modules have physical interface that allow each module to be physically coupled with any others of the plurality of automation modules; a data interface that is capable of data coupling with any others of the plurality of automation modules to exchange data with any others of the plurality of automation modules, etc., as set forth in the claims.

Also, there is no motivation to combine the Lea reference with the Nicholson reference to meet these limitations. It is for these reasons that applicant's invention defines over the prior art of record.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled "Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance."

Art Unit: 2121

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to examiner *Thomas Pham*; whose telephone number is (571) 272-3689, Monday to Thursday from 6:30 AM - 5:00 PM EST or contact Supervisor *Mr. Anthony Knight* at (571) 272-3687.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

Thomas Pham

Patent Examiner

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read 'Thuy Pham', written in black ink.

October 30, 2006